

**State Advisory Panel on Special Education Meeting
Minutes
December 8, 2005**

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m. by Panel chair Joseph Sternlieb. Each panel member introduced his/herself. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted by consensus. (The meeting agenda is attached.)

MaryLee Phelps provided the State Director of Special Education report which centered on the need for review of the State Performance Plan (SPP) for 2005-2010. This plan is mandated by the federal Office of Special Education and addresses areas for monitoring and compliance. It covers 9 issues and 20 indicators and provides a framework and template for organizing and reporting state data. (See attachment A.)

Phelps indicated that the new indicators do not provide data but represent a plan for data that must be collected. She indicated the challenges of collecting statewide data including the fact that the charter schools (which are local education agencies) are not distinguished from the DCPS as a local education agency. SAP members Senora Simpson, Cheryl Hiers-Wilhoyte, and Roque Gerald have had input on the plan to date through the SPP committee which had convened to discuss issues related to the data analysis and have helped to finalize the plan.

A discussion followed with comments and questions related to:

- the lack of readability of the report format and the need for more detailed data;
- the application of Carnegie units to charter schools; how the units relate to special education students (to the extent that the federal government wants more students in diploma vs. certificate programs); concerns that many special education students are getting regular education diplomas but cannot function at the standard of these diplomas; and the larger issue of disproportionality of special education students in these curricula areas.
- the fact that DC MR5 needs to be updated to reflect the reality of the charter schools (in response to concerns about collecting data from the charter schools);
- advancements that result in dialogue with parents (whether certificate or diploma programs) by the time students are in 6th grade;
- the need to bring back fairness in placement for the benefit of the child;
- the need to focus on improvement activities.

As a result of the above discussion, it was determined that an ad hoc group would meet the following week to provide formal comments on the SPP on behalf of the Panel.

Committee Reports

The next agenda item was committee reports. Glenda Partee provided background rational and context for the committee structure (see attachment B).

Marge Maceda, chair Management and Operations, reported on behalf of the committee. The committee has met and discussed the best way to assess performance of Provision of Services. The committee has discussed Encore (the program that tracks special education students and services within DCPS) and concluded that they need more information as to what Encore measures. A Performance Delivery Matrix was developed which they would like to send to the Special Education Office, principals and special education coordinators for feedback on whether services are provided in a timely manner. The committee also wants to assess system performance across a set of broad measures. The need is to establish the information required to improve services to children and families.

Doreen Hodges, chair of Family Community and Parent Involvement provided a report of the committee's activities. The committee's goal is to make recommendations that will effectively communicate services and supports available to families of children within the District of Columbia's public schools that receive special education services. The committee is identifying basic supports—within the government and external, within community and advocacy groups—and identifying partners and resources that enrich supports.

There was no report from the committee on Quality Teaching and Learning.

Other Business

The bylaws were reviewed and unanimously approved (with minor edits). Panel chair Sternlieb announced that there was \$3,100 for the panel given by a private source for unrestricted funds; also the panel has \$40,000 in local government funds to support its work. The Panel leaders have yet to develop a budget for these funds which will include the development and publishing of the annual report.

Steph Cheng of the SEO staff provided a demonstration of the SAP website. Comments and suggestions were made from Panel members. The next step for the website is to be approved by the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) before it becomes live. Also, to facilitate communications among Panel members, Cheng plans to initiate a Google group.

The next meeting will be held February 16 from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Members in attendance from sign-in sheets:

Tiffany Adams
Brenda Brown
Desiree Brown
Mary Brown
Julie Camerata

Tracy Davis
Margaret Ernst
Deborah Gist
Phil Heinrich
Cheryl Hiers-Wilhoyte

Doreen Hodges
Marge Maceda
Randall B. Moore
Jo Patterson
Maria Powell
Felicia Retland
Senora Simpson
Shauna Spencer
Joseph Sternlieb
Marsha H.B. Thompson
Cecilia Thorne
Clifford Thorne

Beverley Wheeler
Karen Wills-Henry

Other in attendance:

Karen Griffin, DCPS Office of Special
Education
MaryLee Phelps, DCPS Office of
Special Education
Steph Cheng, State Education Office
Dileep Rajan, State Education Office
Glenda Partee, State Education Office

Minutes by Glenda Partee, SEO

Agenda

Meeting of State Advisory Panel on Special Education

Thursday, December 8, 2005

5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Room 900 South

441 4th Street, NW

Washington, DC 20001

- 1) Introductions
- 2) Review of minutes of September Retreat
- 3) Reports
 - State Director of Special Education
 - Working Committees
 - High Quality Teaching and Learning
 - Management and Operations
 - Parental/Community Involvement—Collaboration and Communication
 - Chair's review of approaches to our work and schedule of activities
- 4) Old business - Housekeeping
 - Approval of Bylaws
 - Update of Funds Available
 - Communication/Contact Information
 - Update on Panel staff support
 - Review of SAP Website
 - Standing Committees
 - Policy and Legislation
 - Interagency Relationships
- 4) New Business
- 5) Wrap up and Next Steps

Attachment A—State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicators for 2005-1010

The indicators include:

- 1) Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma compared to percent of all youth in the State graduating with a regular diploma.
- 2) Percent of youth with IEPs dropout out of high school compared to the percent of all youth in the State dropping out of high school.
- 3) Participation and performance of children with disabilities on statewide assessments: (a) percent of districts meeting the State's AYP objectives for progress for disability subgroup; (b) participation rate for children with IEPs in a regular assessment with no accommodations, regular assessment with accommodations, alternate assessment against grade level standards, alternate assessment against alternate achievement standards; (c) proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level standards and alternate achievement standards.
- 4) Rates of suspension and expulsion: (a) percent of districts identified by the State as having a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year; (b) percent of districts identified by the State as having a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of greater than 10 days in a school year of children with disabilities by race and ethnicity..
- 5) Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21: (a) removed from regular class less than 21% of the day; (b) removed from regular class greater than 60% of the day; (c) served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements.
- 6) Percent of preschool children with IEPs who received special education and related services in settings with typically developing peers.
- 7) Percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved: (a) positive social-emotional skills; (b) acquisition and use of knowledge and skills; and (c) use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.
- 8) Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.
- 9) Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification.
- 10) Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic group in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.
- 11) Percent of children with parental consent to evaluate, who were evaluated and eligibility determined within 60 days (or State established timeline).
- 12) Percent of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.
- 13) Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals.

- 14) percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school;
- 15) General supervision system (including monitoring, complaints, hearings, etc.) identifies and corrects noncompliance as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification.
- 16) Percent of signed written complaints with reports issued that were resolved within 60-day timeline or a timeline extended for exceptional circumstances with respect to a particular complaint.
- 17) Percent of fully adjudicated due process hearing requests that were fully adjudicated within the 45-day timeline or a timeline that is properly extended by the hearing officer at the request of either party.
- 18) Percent of hearing request s that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution session settlement agreements.
- 19) Percent of mediations held that resulted in mediation agreements.
- 20) State reported data (618 and State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report) are timely and accurate.

Attachment B

A Rationale and Strategy for Developing the Annual Report of the State Advisory Panel on Special Education of the District of Columbia

In preparation for the State Advisory Panel's annual report (due July 1, 2006), at our September 2005 retreat, Panel members decided to focus our work and data collection on a limited number of priorities to be addressed sequentially throughout the year. The strategy was to focus deeply in a limited number of high need areas where we hoped to make the greatest impact. The Panel decided to make these priorities the work of committees within the following timeframes:

Panel's Priorities for 2005-06

- Provision of Services (the focus of committee work September – November, 2005) to be discussed and reported on at the Panel's November 18 meeting (postponed to Dec. 8, 2005);
- Transition (to be the focus of committee work December, 2005 – February 2006) and reported on at the Panel's February 16 meeting; and
- Transportation (to be the focus of committee work March – May, 2006) and reported on at the May 18 meeting.

The intent was that through this progression of work, a draft report reflecting these areas of focus with recommendations could be available by June, 2006 for public review and comment prior to completion of the final report.

To insure that the work of the Panel was aligned with reforms in regular education in the District, the committees were organized around the three main goals in the ***Declaration of Education***, the strategic plan for improving DC Public Schools presented by Clifford B. Janey, Superintendent and Chief State School Officers, May 2, 2005.

Those goals are to:

- (1) Provide High-Quality Teaching and Learning in Every Classroom in Every School (with focus on strong standards and curriculum, a system of effective schools, welcoming and safe schools, high-quality teachers and principals, and partnership for success), and with special education priorities cited on p. 17 (see box);
- (2) Ensure Management and Operations Support High-Quality Teaching and Learning in Every Classroom in Every School (with focus on procurement, human resources, facilities, safety and health, financial management, and information technology); and
- (3) Create a Culture of Transparency, Open Communication and Collaboration to Support High-Quality Teaching and Learning in Every Classroom in Every School.

The three committees--(1) High-Quality Teaching and Learning, (2) Management and Operations, and (3) Communication and Collaboration--were to address each of the each of the priorities from the perspective of the Superintendent's strategic plan and the needs of disabled children and youth in the District.

The *Declaration of Education* (p. 17) identified the following priorities to provide a continuum of model special education programs:

- Implement research-based

Attachment 1

How do we define/describe the provision of services within the context of special education? Following are suggested descriptions.

Special Education: includes instructional and resource programs and related services, unique materials, physical plant adjustments, and other special education facilities, such as instruction in other settings, which modify, supplement, support, or are in the place of the standard educational program of the public schools. The term includes speech pathology and vocational education.

Related services: are supportive services which are required to assist a handicapped child to benefit from special education. Such services include: speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling and rehabilitation counseling services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. The term also includes transportation, school health services, social work services, and parent counseling and training.

Source: Mental Health Journal: Special Education Primer. Retrieved 12/8/05 from <http://www.therapistfinder.net/journal/sped/related.html>.

Attachment 2

Proposed Format for Committee Reports

- Committee name, description and members
- Objectives and how the committee viewed its charge with respect to the priority (e.g., provision of services, transition, transportation)
- Area(s) of focus
- Background information/data needed and strategies for identifying and accessing information
- Available resources and partnerships
- Next Steps
- Recommendations